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DIPLOMATISTS

AND

MINERS.

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DIPLOMATISTS

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Two international Congresses are being held just now, quite near one another, and each in one of those small neutral countries which enjoy universal sympathy.

The one held at the Hague, which is attended by diplomatists, jurisconsults and members of Parliaments, has been convened by the Emperor of Russia for the purpose of deciding what steps should be taken with a view of restraining the preparations for war which are being made by nearly all the European powers.

The other, held at Brussels, consists of the representatives of the coal miners of Western Europe and devotes itself entirely to the examination of the claims of the proletariat.

From various quarters people have tried to throw doubt upon the sincerity of the Tsar, insinuating that he was prompted by altogether other sentiments than those of philanthropy, and that his only object was to secure the immediate and direct interests of Russia.

The existence of those interests cannot be disputed. But, putting aside the question of humanitarian sentiments — and why should not the Tsar be capable of such? — the interest of Russia, instead of being put down to selfish motives on the part of the Tsar, should be considered, rather, as an additional proof of his desire to see the realization of his proposals.

There is, in fact, a good reason for Russia not increasing the present expenses of her military organization. Everyone knows that Russia does not possess sufficient means to meet the ever increasing needs of her budget. Obligated to borrow and to have recourse to foreign capital, she must necessarily be careful with her credit, if she does not want to find herself at any moment at the

mercy of her creditors. The Tsar cannot ignore this situation. And realizing that Russia cannot in the long run face both the expenses caused by the war preparations and those which are required for the development of the country, he must have thought it wiser to try and save the unnecessary expenses, instead of any outlay likely to be producing good results in a more or less distant future.

Nobody ignores that there are great difficulties to be surmounted and serious efforts to be made, in order to arrive at the international agreement on which the proposals examined at the Hague are based. But one is allowed to suppose that the promoter and his advisers have not been the last to recognize that it will be impossible to attain a satisfactory result, without disposing of the requisite means to enforce the decisions come to. We may, therefore, hope that the representatives of Russia will not arrive at the Hague without being enabled to submit some *practical* programme to the eminent personages assembled there. Should it be otherwise, the Conference will have to separate without having accomplished its task, and, once more, the world will have the opportunity of ascertaining, as in 1890, after the famous conference convened by the Emperor of Germany, that it is not sufficient, in order to arrive at a practical result, to submit an idea, however generous it may be, to a certain number of men whose scepticism equals, if not often surpasses, their intelligence, or to philanthropists who never have known the workers, except in books or in dreams.

To carry out a reform, such as the one aimed at by the Emperor of Germany, it would have been necessary for him to meet with a few men determined to succeed, and animated by sentiments altogether different from those which belong to the economists, jurists, consultants and philosophers to whom he addressed himself. His fate was a different one, and, thus, the Berlin Conference failed pitifully, notwithstanding the sincerity of the Emperor of Germany, and notwithstanding the generous ideal, the realization of which he pursued in the interest of social peace.

Is this going to be the result of the conference of the Hague, and for the same reason? A near future will show.

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Under the present *régime*, as under all former systems, only more so, Peace and War are nearly always determined by economic considerations. They are simply the phases of industrial, commercial and financial competition between the upper classes. Now, the Tzar has not at his Congress included a proposal

to consider means by which this competition could be stopped. Moreover, he could not think of doing so.

On the other hand, this question will be fully considered at the other Congress, viz., that of the miners at Brussels.

The entire activity of modern society, being at the mercy of the coal industry, the wage-earners who depend, or are considered to depend, on this industry for their living, can boast, not only of producing the bread of most other great industries, but they could also rightly claim to dispense the "bread of peace and of war," if, beyond the frontiers, they agreed to regulate the output of this "bread."

I therefore consider it more useful at the present time than it has ever been before to call their attention to my proposals *re* the international regulation of the coal output. Besides, the scheme is not altogether my own to-day.

It dates from 1893. Received with enthusiasm by the French and Belgian miners, it has been no less cordially approved of by the British miners wherever it has been brought to their notice. It has met with a hearty reception on the part of those owners who have studied it, because it secures their material interests, and does not interfere with the authority needed in their relations with the workmen.

But, as a matter of fact, my scheme was made known for the first time in 1895, at the Miners' Sixth International Congress in Paris, where it was propounded and supported by the French and Belgian delegates, with a few exceptions members of the French and Belgian Parliaments. And it cannot be seriously denied that these men are possessed of a certain competency with regard to the true interests of the miners, who never fail to give them their entire confidence. From one end of Europe to the other, the special press and all the daily newspapers of importance were greatly interested in the discussion which took place at the Miners' Congress. And the criticism to which my scheme was subjected, necessarily superficial on certain points, was infinitely rarer than the enthusiastic commendations. The worst that was said was that the scheme was "too good." At the same time, it was approved of by a great many economists, jurists and technical men—a class of people who cannot be accused of interesting themselves in chimerical enterprises.

I have not seen the leaders for the last two or three years, and I ignore whether my scheme for the international regulation of the coal output which has been on the agenda of every Congress since

1893 is included this year or not. But this is of very little importance, the project being by no means abandoned, as some people imagine. The matter is constantly advancing towards a practical solution. And the miners are aware that, whether the scheme is included in this year's agenda or not, I am determined to carry it out, unless I am seriously incapacitated from doing so, or somebody proves to me that I am working on wrong lines. The latter has not yet been done.

In a pamphlet published in 1896, which was translated into English the following year, I have not only made known the historical part of my scheme, but I also replied to the various objections which were raised.

Therefore, I do not return to the objections made, as these pious discussions on certain commercial and economic sides of my project do not interest the miners. I shall simply confine myself to rapidly indicating the phases which the question has gone through since the Paris Congress.

Referred, in 1895, to the Miners' International Permanent Committee, in spite of the efforts made by the French and Belgian delegates, my scheme has met with the usual fate of any scheme, the examination of which is entrusted to committees which are not specially appointed to that effect.

The International Committee did not pay the least attention to my scheme. However, at the Aix-la-Chapelle Congress, held in 1896, the principle of the regulation was unanimously adopted, and even the British delegates voted in favour of it. Since then, efforts have been made each year to protest against the *vis inertia* of the committee, but they only met with evasive replies. Some more or less bitter words were exchanged, and there the business ended.

Finally, at the Vienna Congress which was held in August last year, and where the French and Belgians supported my scheme as usual, Mr. B. Pickard, M.P., and General Secretary to the Miners' International Committee, tried to explain that, in order to call together the delegates of the various nationalities with a view to discussing my proposals and to formulating a plan of organization, money was wanted, and that the Committee had no money. It was a poor argument. And one feels surprised that Mr. Pickard, whose frankness is proverbial, did not think fit to openly reply that, in his character of an enemy to outsiders, he would not have anything to do with a project emanating from an ex-owner, especially as this ex-owner

from the very start had been supported by a man who, according to the views of some of the British delegates, was not qualified to speak in the miners' name. Mr. Pickard might have added that a Britisher of the old school, like himself, absolutely declined, *a priori*, to seriously consider an idea having for its origin a continental brain.

Most of the British leaders, but not all — I have great pleasure in stating it—are, like Mr. Pickard, imbued with the spirit of old Trade-Unionism, a spirit which renders them extremely distrustful of the owners, making them thus often lose the advantages of their practical sense. However, if, at Vienna, Mr. Pickard did not openly oppose my scheme, it was altogether different with his lieutenant, Ed. Cowey, another British delegate and representing, like Mr. Pickard, the Yorkshire mining district.

Cowey simply took his ground on the arguments put forward in Paris by Henri Moller—the German leader—in the name of marxist and collectivist orthodoxy, which has nothing to do with the whole matter. But, whilst Moller was in favour of the proposals being seriously ventilated, Cowey declared that it was urgent to reject them once for all, because it was wasting time to discuss a problem which could not be solved under the present system.

This opinion prevailed. The resolution moved by Cowey was voted for by all his countrymen, by the Germans and by the majority of the Austrian delegates who eagerly trod in Mr. Cowey's footsteps. But this vote has not the least importance. And since the Vienna meeting various circumstances point to the fact that even among the British delegates there is more than one who does not consider himself bound by the vote of the Cowey resolution. As regards the opposition of the Germans, it has never been final. Moller's opinion is by no means shared by all his fellow-countrymen, and as far as the Austrians are concerned, the miners of Western Europe need not trouble about them, except for reasons of solidarity which should exist between all workers, and particularly between workers of the same industry. Western Europe can regulate the coal output, even if Austria does not adhere to the projected combination. And if the Austrian miners should prefer to remain outside the combination and to continue their miserable existence, simply in order not to hurt the collectivist opinions of some of their leaders, they are at liberty to do so. But I do not think they will.

According to Mr. Cowey, no serious reform can be realized under

the present economic system. Also, from the standpoint of pure collectivist doctrine, one would be wrong in attempting to radically ameliorate the working classes' conditions of existence.

In certain quarters that opinion might be comprehensive enough. But it is strange to hear similar views expressed by a Trade Unionist, and I am surprised, for instance, Thos. Burt and John Wilson, who certainly are not extreme men, did not think fit to protest against Mr. Cowey's utterances.

As a matter of fact, Britishers have always claimed, and with good reason, to be less inclined than any other nation to go in for theories, at the same time being more desirous than continental people to seek reforms whose urgency is manifest, and whenever the opportunity is afforded. On the other hand, the Trade Unionists had never given cause for supposing that they were to such an extent fanatic of economic fatalism.

At any rate, they would thus be more royalist than the King, for the socialists in France, Belgium and Germany have never manifested the desire of folding their arms until the existing *régime* has gently terminated its present phase of evolution. On the contrary, they take advantage of any opportunity to wrest from their governments, by scraps, the very smallest amelioration of the workers' lot. And it cannot be disputed that the realization of my scheme will result, as far as the miners are concerned at any rate, in a great amelioration of their conditions of existence. Nobody, not even Cowey, has tried to deny this fact among the hundred of writers and orators who have dealt with the question.

Moreover, why were the Trade Unions founded? Why are they in existence? Why do they send delegates to international congresses, and, lastly, why do they send working men to the House of Commons, if it were not with the object of getting reforms or of enforcing those which are compatible with the present *régime*?

Therefore it is wrong for a miners' representative, like Cowey, to oppose a scheme, based, as mine is, on a cordial understanding between masters and men. And he has certainly lost sight of the fact that the very day when my project is adopted and carried out the present system will be replaced by a new *régime*, in which there will be less social injustice and fewer innocent tears shed.

Doubtless, in pronouncing his sentence of death against my scheme, Cowey imagined,—but in this he was quite wrong—that in the organization proposed by me, it was intended to more or less substitute

the workers for the employers, and perhaps even to abandon to them, or to their delegates, the management of the whole machinery. He probably considered that such a task would be rather a heavy one for them, and that they would be incapable for a certain length of time, at any rate, of discharging these functions in such a way as not to make the present system a matter of regret.

But Mr. Cowey need not have this fear. My sympathy for the miners is far too sincere to ever think of making them a similar proposal. No, the management of the machinery will be left to the owners, as in the past, subject, however, to a new feature being introduced in the future in the relations between employers and the employed. And not only will the employers be obliged to respect the legitimate rights of the workers but, as a result of the agreement, it will be impossible for them to evade the obligations stipulated, even supposing that, among the employers, there should be some who were unscrupulous enough to try to do so.

This will be exceptional, I do not hesitate in saying so. And I must remind Mr. Cowey that when I formulated my proposals, I did so not only in my capacity as an owner, but also as being responsible towards the numerous capitalists and shareholders interested in the colliery of which I had been obliged, through exceptional circumstances, to take the management in my own hands. I did not pose as a philanthropist. On the contrary, I expressly declared that my object was to secure the interests of capital and labour alike.

Besides, what matters where an idea emanates from, when it is recognized to be good and beneficial for everybody, and for the parties directly interested to begin with. A great number of men belonging to the working classes have proposed to their comrades, with a view to putting an end to their grievances, measures which in the long run would have proved disastrous to those whose cause they were intended to serve. Well, for once, an owner has submitted a proposal by which the workers will benefit. That is all.

Again, I do not by any means deny the right of the workers to take the initiative of reforms which interest them. I have proved this by strongly insisting upon the leaders to make my project their own, to exert themselves in getting it adopted by the owners, by themselves instead of by me.

I go, in this direction, even further than the British leaders, for I hold that any international settlement of questions interesting the working classes must be initiated and prepared by the

representatives of the workers, and that, without the workmen's assistance, no such agreement can work satisfactorily in the long run. But the miners' international committee having declared its inability to deal with certain questions of social and political economy, and, more particularly, of international organization, the committee having declared that it was unable to successfully discharge the task accepted in 1895, furthermore, having let the matter drop, I contend that I am to-day absolutely entitled to pursue the realization of my scheme, according to my own ideas, without the British leaders being justified in upbraiding me for needlessly interfering with their business. And also, as I shall be careful to take into account any proposal they may make to me, as well as any modification which they may suggest in the provisional plan of organization, which I have worked out instead of themselves and which is in their hands. It is, of course, subject to amelioration. But I am entitled to say, judging by the reception which this work has met with, in Great Britain notably, that the plan of organization submitted to them offers a sufficient basis for serious discussion.

Moreover, there are in Great Britain a great number of highly qualified men who from the very start have taken a great interest in my proposals, who consider that the difficulties in the way of their being put into operation are by no means so great as they appear, and who are even willing to support me in the efforts which yet remain to be made in order to attain ultimate success. And, without naming anybody, I may be allowed to tell the British leaders that, on various occasions, I have received encouragement from quarters where most opposition was to be feared. The knowledge of these men with regard to the actual interests of the coal industry cannot be doubted for a single moment.

Thus, it would be a mistake to believe, as has been said and repeated everywhere, that the "Britishers" won't have anything to do with my scheme. Perhaps Messrs. Pickard and Cowey may be against it, but they do not represent Britishers as a whole.

* * *

The closest relations exist between Peace and War and the present economic *régime*. This fact can be easily demonstrated by the analogies existing between the Russian proposals and my project.

It is true that my project, *which does not need legislative interference*, is relatively easy to carry out more or less immediately, whilst much time will be necessary to give effect to even part of the results aimed at by the proposals of the Tsar.

But, on both sides, the object is to regulate and to come to some international agreement.

At the present time, in fact, certain economic problems, which cover all problems, can only be solved by an international understanding. By departing from that basis, one would have to confront absolute failure, and, meanwhile, those countries, who might attempt to do so, would run the risk of being duped by those who kept themselves aloof.

It is because of this, that the adoption of my proposals by France and Belgium would simply result in a failure. Great Britain's co-operation is indispensable. The French and Belgian miners understand this perfectly, and they are confident that their British comrades will eventually do so. They cannot ignore, having caused their corporation to constitute the International Federation, that agreement is a matter of solidarity, and that the contracting parties must meet with a true spirit of conciliation.

The case is exactly the same with regard to any limitation or reduction of armaments. Considered from a political standpoint, everybody knows what a double or treble alliance leads to. On both sides, the contracting parties are obliged, as a result of the agreements entered into, not to allow themselves to be outdistanced, as far as armaments are concerned, if they do not want to find themselves some day in a state of inferiority.

Although less evident, there exists another analogy between the Russian proposals and mine, viz, that the adoption of either of them would result in giving satisfaction to all true lovers of peace.

At first sight, each of these two proposals appears to interest only one profession or class; one, military men; and the other, miners. But the realization of the Russian proposals will have economic, as well as social results which go far beyond their political significance. And the miners being, as I have already stated, the masters of the "bread of Peace and of War," can, if they choose, exert their influence in the political world as peremptorily as in an economic and social way.

The public does not realize that, because the miners have not what

is called a good newspaper press, particularly in France, where their number is not important enough to be of great weight in the electoral balance, as is the case in Great Britain. Generally, their discussions and labours are only mentioned in the special press and in the workers' organs. Since the Paris Congress, 1895, where the discussion of my proposals drew attention to them, the daily papers, even in Great Britain, scarcely allude to the proceedings of their international gatherings. Furthermore, the workmen's leaders are themselves workers, or retired workers, many of whom their comrades have delegated to the various Parliaments. As such, they are often exposed to the jeerings of the leading classes, and even to calumnies and all sorts of manœuvres which tend to rouse the suspicions of the very men whose conditions they try to ameliorate. In short, they have to deal with all sorts of material difficulties. Their means are limited as well as their time. All this is true, perhaps not in Great Britain, but more or less all over on the Continent. When they meet internationally, not speaking the same language, they are only able to make themselves understood by a section of the gathering, and so forth.

However devoid of brilliancy they appear to be, compared to the diplomatists, yet it is the miners, and not the diplomatists, who control the secrets of Peace. The diplomatists and politicians may want war, no government will dare start in a bellicose adventure, without having examined the ground in the direction of the International Committee of the coal output, and before having secured its assent. This committee, whose establishment forms part of my scheme, and which will be composed of owners, miners' delegates and qualified experts, will thus be the real final arbitrator of Peace and War. And although the miners represented on this committee will not be in sufficient number to enforce their views always, they will probably not be the sole members of the committee to refuse to enter on an "aggressive" war. But even if they were alone in their opinion, and in minority on the committee, it would still depend on them to avert any projected war.

It is as impossible to make war without coal as it would be to replace the miners at a moment's notice. An apprenticeship of two or three years is necessary to turn out an able coal hewer. And if, thanks to their international combination, the miners decline to put out coal, wanted for the manufacture of arms, for producing guns and armour-plates, for making powder and projectiles, and espe-

cially for railway transportation, war will become impossible, as the armies could not be mobilised or the fleets made ready for active service.

Democracy which, proportionally, supports the greatest burden of militarism—blood-tax in the strongest force of the term—as well as all other taxes of which the greater part is absorbed by armed peace, will approve of, and support, the miners who will thus have contributed to enforce a pacific solution of any difficulty that may arise in future. And as no government will continue to annually spend millions and millions in order to keep permanent armies, without any object, an end will be put to the present military *régime*—the only solution possible which will satisfy democracy.

Therefore, should the conference at the Hague prove a failure, there would be no reason for the true friends of peace to despair. Moreover, they would be able to look forward to an infinitely more radical solution than that foreseen by the Russian proposals, and they would perhaps even be willing to co-operate with the miners in order to have their wishes more quickly realized.

The support which the propaganda made in Great Britain by the organisers of the Peace Crusade received seems to give the miners good cause to reckon upon a certain amount of assistance from that quarter, for, among the most fervent Peace Crusaders, we find a great number of labour leaders, and, in the foremost rank, Thos. Burt, John Wilson and Sam Woods, all three M.P.'s. These leaders cannot ignore certain results which the adoption of the Russian proposals would have. They must be aware that the primary cause of the present prosperous condition of the coal industry is due to the demands of the metallurgic industries, demands notably caused by the incessant construction of battleships and by the other military armaments which the conference at the Hague, if successful, will put a stop to. They cannot ignore that success at the Hague would mean : less coal, consequently, lower wages in future for the miners, and less work in the metallurgic industries, with all the consequences, and that even a partial disarmament will necessarily increase the number of those who depend on work for their living. All these circumstances have not prevented Messrs. Burt, Wilson and Woods from taking an active part in the Peace Crusade. And they were right, because it is the duty of every true man to help in any sound and progressive movement. For these three leaders, more than for anyone else, there is a solid reason for making the realization of my scheme easier to the miners, and perhaps it would not be expecting too much if I hoped to see them

shew in favour of my scheme a small part of the zeal which they have displayed towards the Russian proposals.

* * *

It will probably be said that there are yet certain difficulties to be overcome before my object is attained. I am aware of that more than anybody else. But what is generally overlooked is that, as a matter of fact, there is presently but one serious difficulty to overcome—the one that it has pleased the British leaders to place in my way. It may be that some of them simply wished to gain time. If that be so, we shall before long have the opportunity of a frank explanation, and I hope of agreeing. I know what to do, if we do not agree.

But I am not afraid of positively stating that, sooner or later, my scheme will be carried out, and when that takes place, no human power, however strong, can prevent it working well.

For my scheme, although based on a loyal and cordial agreement between master and man, depends at present for its realization on one thing only, viz., its being approved of by the British miners. And I challenge anybody to contradict that. The Scottish miners have already declared in favour of my scheme, those at least who have been made acquainted with it. And the adoption of my proposals by the men in the other districts of Great Britain is beyond doubt, for my scheme includes the eight hours' day, a living wage, a superannuation fund, well endowed and non contributory, and, besides, a substantial participation in the owners' profits. Under these conditions it is improbable that the British miners will decline to go hand in hand with their French and Belgian comrades, giving thereby a practical form to the international understanding of which they are partisans. As far as the German miners are concerned they will not be long in joining the combination, and in spite of what has been said to the contrary, I have solid reasons for being very positive on this point.

With regard to the owner's adhesion there is no use troubling about that at the present stage. Moreover, their adhesion is certain, for they will have to give it, either voluntarily or otherwise. In the first place, because it would be to their interest to do so; secondly, because nothing would be easier than to compel them.

The plan of organization, as proposed by me, takes into account all

the legitimate rights which Great Britain is entitled to, owing to the position she occupies in the coal industry. All the essential points have been foreseen, and by practical and simple means the financial question, which is not the least important, has been provided for.

Of course, the reform suggested by me will necessarily meet with prejudice, "routine" and some other obstacles, as is the case with all reforms, however necessary they may be. But it will injure no interest worth speaking of. It may in a few isolated cases, but this is no argument. Were it so, one would have to renounce all reforms.

Thus, it has been said that in causing the price of a staple article, of the bread of industry, to be raised, I was doing work anti-social in the highest degree. It would be to the advantage of a single class of workers, consequently, detrimental, at least indirectly, to all other workers. But, really, this objection is too childish, and it would be manifestly unjust to ask the miners to resign themselves to a miserable existence, in order to provide other industries with a cheap material which they cannot do without. Moreover, when the workers in the metallurgic industries, in the textile industry and many others realize the benefit their comrades, the coal miners, have derived from the international agreement as to output, they, too, will wish to combine with a view to regulating the production of their particular manufacture. And they will succeed in doing so, deriving the corresponding benefits. The masters will receive by the regulation of the production as great and proportional advantages as the workers. I should be wrong in denying that, having always declared that it was this double object I tried to attain.

I do not say that my scheme is a remedy for all evils, or a universal panacea. I do not aim at attaining the millenium—a goal which appears to be dear to British journalists. I willingly recognize that it is difficult to foresee all the consequences which the realization of my scheme will bring about, the more so as the international agreement come to between the coal miners will, at an early date, be followed by an international agreement between the workers of the world. But I am intimately convinced that the putting into operation of my scheme will contribute to the establishment of a better social order which will be the outcome of the regulation of production, combined with shorter working hours and at the same time with an increase of wages, far better, to my mind, than the

system put forward by those who advocate the socialisation of all means of production. Moreover, the regulation as proposed by me will be neither narrow or mischievous, for it will not be enforced by the State. It will be, in fact, the outcome of a loyal agreement between Capital and Labour, with the object of putting a stop to the prevailing economic anarchy, which is as bad for the masters as for the men, and, as a matter of fact, opposed to the true interests of consumers.

And it is because of this that I consider all honest men, and in the first place, all those who seek to ameliorate the lot of the workers, and to gradually develop the fourth "état" in the very midst of the society to which it is destined to succeed, ought to approve of the efforts which the miners are making in order to put a stop to the primary cause of the always increasing antagonism between employers and the employed, and to render less frequent, at any rate, these strikes and lock-outs which are so detrimental to all interested and to the community at large.

Meanwhile, let the miners remember the old saying: Help yourself and Heaven will help you.

PARIS, May, 1899.

P.S.—At Brussels my provisional plan was laid before the Congress by the French and Belgian delegates, with a resolution to the effect that it should be submitted to the various unions and lodges in the different countries asking them to state at an early date any modifications which they would like to see introduced in the drafting of a definite plan.

The British delegates, always very precise, often at the expense of their practical sense, protested against this resolution being put, because it had not been submitted in time to the International Committee. They, however, moved an amendment to the effect that a report and a definite plan should be drafted in view of next year's congress at Paris. This was finally adopted by all the delegates present. The fact of the congress, who decided last year to abandon the whole matter, having voted in favour of its being taken up again is important, although I am the first to recognize that the vote itself carries no great weight.

During last August, the same German leaders who until this year had opposed my proposals, on the ground that they were against collectivism, decided to go hand in hand with their French and Belgian comrades. Having considered and discussed my plan they had it translated into German and inserted in full in their weekly organ, commenting on it in the most flattering terms. The leaders are explaining the scheme to the men at their meetings whenever an opportunity occurs, and the men, of course, are unanimously in favour of its being carried out as soon as possible. Thus, in stating that the opposition of the German leaders was not final I did not go beyond the actual facts of the case.

A large number of the British leaders, including several of the most prominent, have also agreed to act in accordance with the resolution proposed at Brussels by the French and Belgian delegates. They are seriously considering the provisional plan, at least they are supposed to be doing so, and they have formally promised to submit copies of same to the various unions and lodges in their district. As the examination which the latter are requested to make is simply the work of a few hours, it is not too much to expect that it will be finished in a few weeks. But, after all, it does not matter a great deal whether they do so or not. Those who are not willing to take the trouble of examining the 38 articles of which the provisional plan consists, and of deciding on its merits, will simply be ignored by their comrades. As for the stragglers, they are not worth troubling about, and will be left alone until they choose to join those of their comrades who have a better idea of their duties.

Several of the British owners' associations have also been approached with a view to inducing them to examine the projected combination. Those remaining will be asked to do so shortly. The results so far have been generally satisfactory. Thus, it may be expected that the whole matter will reach its final stage in a near future. Should the owners take a right view of the matter, the necessary steps to carry out the combination will be taken immediately, and there is every reason to believe that the policy adopted by them will be a favourable one. However, should this not happen, the combination between the miners will take place all the same, and, with an international combination, they will be the masters of the situation. It will be in their power to enforce any decisions they may come to, whenever they like, and it will be the first move in the way of the present *régime* being replaced by a new one, based on

true democratic principles. As for the consequences which will, more or less at once, follow the realization of my scheme, they are of such a far-reaching character that to foresee them all is an impossibility. I have pointed out a few of them in this pamphlet, but there are many others which I leave my readers to discover for themselves.

PARIS, November, 1899.

NOTE

My provisional plan is simply a plan of organization. Consequently, those who declare, after having simply perused this plan, that my proposals for the international regulation of the output of coal are not practical, cannot claim to be taken seriously, however intelligent they may be.

My scheme has been carefully examined by the highest economic authorities and by experts in the coal industry. With a few exceptions they have proclaimed the practicability of my proposals, and those who have expressed a different opinion have not been able to put forward a single serious argument in support of their views. I therefore consider myself entitled to maintain that the practicability of my scheme is a fact beyond discussion. It is based on sound economic principles and extremely simple to carry out. But it is said to be too gigantic and revolutionary in its provisions.

I do not wish to contradict this contention. I even believe that my scheme is more revolutionary than it appears to be at first sight, because of the far-reaching consequences which its being put into operation will have for its more or less immediate result all round. But, as the first result will be to establish harmony and goodwill between Capital and Labour, in the coal industry to begin with, there appears to be no reason why those who seek to prevent strikes and lock-outs should oppose it. Moreover, all those who have seriously examined my proposals are convinced that the consequences of their realization will be beneficial to the community at large. And it is because it is so that, from the outset, they have met with the approval of all true advocates of social and democratic reforms.

Although based on cordial relations between Capital and Labour and safeguarding the interests and rights of both parties, my scheme can only be realised by an international agreement,

to be initiated by the men. The misunderstanding with the British leaders, which heretofore has prevented the necessary combination between the miners of Western Europe, does not exist any longer. Therefore, what remains to be done is simply a few weeks' material work. But taking into account human nature and unforeseen circumstances, I expect that it will take a couple of months or so, before the definite plan to be submitted to the owners can be drafted. Anyhow, we are on the eve of a thorough change in the coal trade, and the owners would certainly be wrong in trying to ignore it.

It cannot be disputed that it is in the owners' interest to adhere to some agreement on the lines suggested, and I hope that the majority of the British owners will ultimately take this view. From a business point of view, no owner can object to be enabled to sell his coal at a price which, even in times of bad trade, will leave him a fair profit, at the same time allowing him to live on good terms with his workmen, by granting them the conditions required for a decent material and moral existence. And this can be done without the owners having to submit to any undue interference in the management of their industry.

I am, of course, not unaware of the fact that trade is good at present, and it should be remembered that my proposals were made when trade was extremely depressed, at a time when the only remedy was to limit the working days. This may not be necessary to-day, at least on the continent. But, even when trade is good, some sort of control is desirable. Besides, sooner or later, we shall have to face less prosperous times than at present.

Again, no control can be efficient without the men being a part of the combination. Consequently, they are entitled to share in the profits, which will be made thanks to their intervention.

The owners will perhaps object that, trade being good at present, they do not want the men to assist them, preferring to keep the whole of the profits for themselves. From a certain point of view they may be right, but only to a certain

extent. At any rate, the men's case is a different one. The men have an absolute right to share in the profits when they are big, and not only when they are small or when they are no profits at all. Moreover, the owners should not lose sight of the fact that the miners, being on the eve of combining internationally, will soon be the masters of the situation. And as long as they keep within a just limit they are certain to be supported by public opinion. No true Christian will be against them.

Again, the resistance on the part of the owners could not last more than a few days, and, on work being resumed, the owners would have to pay the costs. Under those conditions they will certainly consider their position twice, before taking the wrong direction. The intelligent owners, whom I believe to be the majority in Great Britain, will consider their interests, and act accordingly, viz, go hand in hand with their workmen. As for the minority, who suffer from prejudice and want to stick to their antediluvian ideas, they will have to face this double alliance, and finally to surrender or to clear out—to submit or to resign. And, in both cases, they will have to pay the losses inflicted upon the men by their obstinacy.

It is in the owners' interest to step in at once, and not to wait until the miners have drafted their definite plan, because, at the present stage, any reasonable objection will meet with due consideration, whilst, later on, no concession can be expected to be made by the men. As far I am concerned, I should advise the men to adopt either of these attitudes, and, although not claiming to be their leader, I believe that my advice would be listened to.

Great Britain, and her industry as a whole, is more interested than any other country in the realization of my scheme. I pledge myself to demonstrate this if attention is paid to my to-day's note. But I do not intend, in future, to waste my time in writing for anybody's waste paper basket. I have something more important to do.

Paris, October 14th 1899.



ROBERT BAIRD Esq.
Secretary to the Lanarkshire Coalmasters' Association
GLASGOW

DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged for your amiable letter of 29th Sept., in reply to which I beg to refer to the enclosed note.

I should be glad to learn that my overtures have been received by the Lanarkshire coalmasters with the friendly spirit in which they were made. And you will allow me to add that when, in 1893, I formulated my proposals for the international regulation of the output of coal, I did so in my capacity of an owner, by no means intending to cut his own throat, although deeply sympathizing with the unfortunate Belgian miners who were nearly starving. I do not conceal that I am at present actuated by other motives than six years ago, as my interests in the coal industry are no longer of importance. But to-day, as in 1893, my proposals deserve to meet with the British owners serious attention — and approval.

As I told you when I had the pleasure of seeing you, I am ready to give you and the coalmasters any desirable information, with perfect frankness, and to reply to any objection made. Should the Lanarkshire coalmasters not be afraid of devoting a little time to the reading of some of my literature, I shall be glad to forward the desired pamphlets, etc. to those who may ask for them. The owners would make a great mistake in believing that my scheme cannot or will not be carried out. I am absolutely determined to have it done in a near future, and I have to-day the requisite means to attain my end.

Faithfully yours,
Emile LEWY.

Paris, October 14th 1899,
10, avenue de Villiers.

ROBERT BAIRD, Esq.,
Secretary to the Lanarkshire Coalmasters' Association.

DEAR SIR,

I beg to thank you for having kindly taken the trouble to submit my letter of the 14th inst. to the members of your Executive.

If I thought that the Lanarkshire coalmasters were opposed, by principle, to the very idea of coming to some agreement on the lines suggested by me, meaning protection of their legitimate interests and cordial relations with their workmen, I should at once ask you not to trouble yourself any more about the matter. But as I decline, until further notice, to take that view. I forward you by book-post some copies of my recent pamphlet, "Diplomatists and Miners," and also an article from the *Newcastle Morning Mail*, requesting you to kindly send these papers on to the members of your Executive.

It never occurred to me to ask the Lanarkshire coalmasters, or anybody else, to believe in the practicability of my scheme, although I challenge them to state a single reason based on experience, or simply on common sense, in support of a different opinion. Only those who have taken the trouble to seriously consider the question, and who are acquainted with certain facts and circumstances, can share my opinion that the practicability of my scheme is a matter beyond discussion. But in face of something entirely new, I can easily fancy that the general feeling must be in the adverse direction.

Anyhow, I contend that the Lanarkshire coalmasters would be utterly wrong in opposing me a sort of previous question, on the sole ground that they do not believe my scheme to be workable, unless this be a mere pretext for sending me to the wall, and for declaring that they do not want to have anything to do with their workmen, beyond paying them such wages as they cannot help paying. It is in that direction only that I could interpret a refusal to seriously consider the provisional plan submitted to them, on its merits, and to state the modifications which they may desire to see introduced in the crafting of a definite plan.

I simply ask them to do this, and I do not ask for anything else. And having set forth, in the note appended to my last letter, the reasons why, to my mind, the coalmasters should adopt that course, I consider it needless to insist any further upon these reasons.

Being already in touch with some coalowners in England, I addressed myself, whilst in Scotland, to the Lanarkshire coalmasters, through their qualified medium, thus expecting to be made acquainted with their views. Besides, it was a simple matter of courtesy, and courtesy is considered an elementary duty with the class of society I usually frequent.

I expect to be able to draft the definite plan, as well as a detailed report, in the course of next month. Aiming at establishing cordial relations between masters and men, I should sincerely regret to have to state in my report that the owners, or even a section of them, decline to listen to my proposals, and, consequently, that the miners, unless they want to renounce their absolute rights, will have no alternative left but to compel these owners in some way or other, I hope this will not be the case. At any rate, being fully convinced that I can do a great deal of good to the mining population, and to many others as well, I will certainly not renounce my efforts, nor allow myself to be barred, or even to be needlessly delayed, simply because some people, be they owners or leaders, do not believe in, or rather because they do not want, to take the trouble to examine my proposals. For, whatever may be said to the contrary, and notwithstanding the fact that, at first sight, my scheme may appear to be "gigantic," it is extremely simple, and it does not require more than an average business man's experience to have confidence in its well-working, once agreed upon by the men. I shall take care that this be done as rapidly as possible, and in spite of any opposition.

I remain, dear Sir,

Faithfully yours,

EMILE LEWY.

PARIS, November 28th, 1899.



Dear Mr. Burt.

I forwarded you some days ago a copy of the English version of a pamphlet which I published six months ago under the title of "Diplomates et Mineurs," trusting that after having perused it you will approve of the ideas set forth therein, and thus find an additional reason to support me in my efforts with the view to bring about an effective international understanding between the coal miners of Western Europe.

You have always admitted that if it were possible to come to some agreement, having for its object the regulation of the coal output on the lines suggested by me, such an agreement would necessarily be beneficial to all those interested in the coal industry, masters and men alike. Well, it is possible. And as soon as you and your friends have terminated the examination of my provisional plan, and stated the modifications which may be deemed advisable to introduce in the drafting of a definite plan, before submitting it to the coal owners, I will do the rest. And I pledge myself to attain ultimate success; at any rate, to bring the matter to such a point where it will simply depend on the combined miners to have the scheme carried out at any moment they may choose to do so.

I have never tried to conceal the fact that the realization of my scheme will have the most far-reaching consequences outside the coal industry. At various occasions I have pointed out to some of them, and in publishing my recent pamphlet my object was to particularly point to the influence which the realization of my scheme will have on Peace and War.

It cannot be disputed that under the present régime, as under all former systems, only more so, Peace and War are nearly always determined by economic considerations. They are simply the phases of industrial, commercial and financial competition between the upper classes. Now, the realization of my scheme will have for result to render extremely difficult, if not impossible, the waging of such wars, and although, at first sight, this may appear to be a very big order, yet it is neither a dream nor a vision, and every sensible man must agree with me so far, after having read my pamphlet, and particularly the passage referring to this question, pp. 10 and 11.

I confess that it was not with that object in view that I propounded my scheme. And although it was soon made clear to me that this would be one of the first consequences of my scheme coming into operation, I however did not think fit to mention this, until the convocation of the Peace Conference at the Hague afforded me the opportunity of doing so. I was in fear lest it might do more harm than good, as long as my proposals had not been seriously discussed from a more economic standpoint. At present, I regret not having done so long ago, for I feel convinced that if you and your friends had been enabled to grasp that contingency, the British leaders, instead of treating with contempt the scheme laid before them by their French and Belgian comrades in 1895—ridiculing it and their comrades as well—would at once have seriously considered the matter, with the result that my scheme would have been carried out three or

four years ago, and with the further result that the world would not have witnessed the crime of the Transvaal war.

For, although by no means sharing the opinion of those who denounce Mr. Chamberlain as being prompted by the basest motives in declaring war, or in compelling the Transvaal to declare it—which is exactly the same thing—yet it cannot be denied that the Transvaal war is nothing but a capitalist war, in the fullest sense of the term, provoked by an authorized representative of the capitalist class. His character as such is even the sole excuse for his policy. But it is sad to have to state that the capitalist régime has for result to pervert its best and most intelligent men to such a point, and a régime which constantly leads to such results is bound to disappear. And the sooner the better. For even with the object of creating a great African Empire, under the suzerainty of Great Britain or otherwise, thus securing new outlets for British industry and commerce, neither the working man nor any true democrat can approve of Mr. Chamberlain's policy. After the adoption of my scheme, putting an end to the present capitalist system, similar wars will no longer be tolerated, nor will it be necessary to have recourse to them in the interest of industry.

To my mind, the British labour leaders would be unpardonable, if, once more, they closed their eyes to self-evidence, and prevented the speedy adoption of my scheme on grounds which cannot be seriously maintained, and whether they believe or not in its practicability or well-working. And they would be so the less as nobody can foresee what perhaps even a near future keeps in store for humanity, if a few politicians are allowed to out their ambitious plans.

According to all probabilities, Great Britain will have the word in her struggle with the Transvaal. Everybody takes this view, notwithstanding Bismarck's prophecy that Great Britain will find her grave in South Africa. But there is, however, one thing which is easy to foresee, viz., that on reaching the final stage we may have to confront difficulties of the most serious character. In what form they may present themselves is impossible to foresee to-day. But, according to circumstances, the Continental Powers, some of them at least, may object to any settlement involving the suppression of the Transvaal Republic, or simply of its political independence. The difficulties which will thus arise may be smoothed over, but, failing this, they may eventually lead to a general war. The contingency of such a calamity is by no means a vision, and, thus, one capitalist crime might easily lead to another which would be the gravest offence ever committed towards humanity. Would not those, who presently have it in their power to avert a similar crime, be unpardonable if they failed to do their duty? I leave that question to be answered by you and your friends.

Faithfully yours,

EMILE LEWY.

PARIS, November 28th, 1899.

Thomas Burt, Esq.,
M.P.

INTERNATIONAL REGULATION OF THE COAL OUTPUT.

M. EMILE LEWY AND MR. G. B. HUNTER.

From the "Newcastle Morning Mail," November 6, 1899.

The recent address to the Economic Society by the President, Mr. G. B. Hunter, with his reference to the propaganda undertaken by M. Emile Lewy, of Paris, for the international regulation of the output of coal has brought to us a lengthy rejoinder by the French champion. He is convinced in the certain adoption of his scheme and soon, which has received a hearty reception from the Welsh Federation. It has yet to come before the Northumberland coalowners and miners. M. Emile Lewy, "going for the would-be economists' writes:—

Mr. G. H. Hunter appears to be an adept of the "laissez-faire" branch of the Manchester school which, whilst recognizing that the conditions of labour are not ideal, contends that the workers ought to be satisfied with their lot. He is of opinion that the present capitalist system having provided all classes with everything that is needed to sustain life—a fact which millions and millions of individuals are daily experiencing to be absolutely incorrect—the workers, instead of constantly troubling the capitalist class with their aims and claims, ought to be content to pick the bones which are being thrown to them, and which they are not even allowed to pick in peace.

It is precisely because, as Mr. Hunter rightly says, the improvement has been great, compared with past times, because the workers, like all other classes, are comparatively more prosperous than they were some fifty years ago. It is because they have got accustomed to a better standard of living, intellectual as well as material, that they do not want to go backwards. They want to go forwards, with the workers, like with most people, "l'appétit vient en mangeant." Mr. Hunter does not exactly disapprove of this desire on the part of the workers. But he wants progress to be made by the same methods as in the past, and, as far as economic questions go, he seems to be of a very conservative character and extremely refractory to innovation.

Thus, he does not admit the workers' claim for "a living wage." According to Mr. Hunter, the claim for a living wage is something wholly delusive, evil even, and only "unthinking" people can find this claim reasonable. However, Mr. Hunter himself seems to think that, after all, a living wage might be beneficent to those who could get it, if only it could be realized. There is, however, one thing that puzzles him, viz., that it would mean to better one class at the expense of another, or, as he puts it, that as all must share the loaf, if one gets his share increased, there will be so much less left for the others. Doubtless, this would happen, and it would be more than difficult to dispute this verity "à la Palisse." But those who, like myself, contend that the claim for a living wage is absolutely just, do so precisely because they also contend that the loaf being badly shared, it is high time to arrive at a better sharing. Those who have got too much ought not to be afraid of the prospect of having a little less.

As a matter of fact, the question is simply this: The claim for

A LIVING WAGE,

can it be realised? Undoubtedly it can. And it can be done not only without difficulty, but by means based on true Christian principles, and without resorting to Collectivist or other more or less revolutionary methods.

My scheme for the international regulation of the coal output, which Mr. Hunter deals with in his address delivered at the opening meeting of the winter session of the Newcastle Economic Society, and which he kindly calls an ingenious scheme, thus not sharing the opinion of the "Newcastle Daily Journal," which some months ago in a lengthy leader treated it simply as idiotic, solves the living wage problem in a very easy and simple way, as far as the coal miners are concerned.

And I should be allowed to add that, whenever I have denounced an evil from which the working classes especially suffer, I have taken care to indicate at the same time the practical means for remedying it, and that these means have always met with the entire approval of those who are acquainted with labour questions and who look at them with an unbiased mind.

further agrees that, so far, the scheme is sane, and that it might be good for the coalowners and miners. Thus, he practically recognises that a living wage can be realised, and, taking this confession, I might declare myself entirely satisfied. He adds, it is true, that possibly the combination would lead to the opening of more mines and to workmen from other trades outside of the mining industry seeking employment in the coal industry. And, although he goes on to say that this is a mere detail, I wish to reply to these objections which have been made from other quarters. Well,

MR. HUNTER'S FEARS

are totally unfounded. New mines of any importance cannot of course be opened before new coalfields have been discovered, and this remains to be done. Moreover, to open new mines of any importance, a large capital is wanted, and must be found. Now, this is not altogether impossible, but it is not so easy as Mr. Hunter might think, for experience has shown that it often takes some twenty years before a new colliery pays, and, apart from the uncertainty of final success of the mining, investors, as a rule, do not like to wait twenty years for a problematic dividend. But even supposing all these obstacles to be removed, the coalowners' interests could not be injured by such a contingency, as thanks to the International Committee of Production the output will always be regulated, according to the requirements of the market. And the community at large will have no cause for regret, because the opening of new mines would mean work for more hands, and more coal for the coming generations' needs. With regard to the influx of workmen from other trades, Mr. Hunter has lost sight of the fact that the employment of labour in a mine is necessarily limited; in a stall there is not room for more than the hewers already employed, and one cannot indefinitely increase the number of underground workmen. The question raised by Mr. Hunter involves another question of interest, viz., that of unskilled labour. I have dealt with it in "a scheme for the regulation of the output of coal by international agreement"—a pamphlet published by Crosby Lockwood, and Son, London, and of which I shall be pleased to forward a copy to Mr. Hunter, should he desire so.

Until now, I have been able to follow Mr. Hunter and to discuss seriously with a kind-hearted man who, although appearing like most economists, to be without any practical experience of the workers, has probably read a great many books on labour questions. But where it becomes difficult for me to understand him is when, after having declared my scheme to be, not only ingenious but sane and practical, and the author to be a clever Frenchman, he suddenly swerves round and proclaims that "symptoms of insanity are revealed."

Mr. Hunter appears to range me among the "unthinking" people. I can assure him that I do not belong to that class of people. At any rate, I have been thinking a good deal in order to find out how a scheme can be sane, and at the same time insane. And although I have tried my best for days and nights, I have not been able yet to understand it. But, being of a very persevering character, I will try again, and I may perhaps finally succeed.

And how is it that these symptoms of insanity were revealed to Mr. Hunter? Because in the "Morning Mail's" article it is said that in conclusion I had "visions not only of other industries following in the same line as it is proposed for the coal trade, but—of the advent of the millennium."

As far as

THE MILLENNIUM

goes, I am obliged to Mr. Hunter for having afforded me the opportunity of stating that I never went in for such a thing. I never pronounced that word, and I am not childish enough to believe in such a happy state of things. The millennium is the exclusive property of some British journalists and orators, and, being neither a Collectivist nor an anarchist, I am not going to deprive them, or anybody else, of their property.

In reference to the first point—other industries following in the same line—it is by no means a vision, but my intimate conviction,

him that he will have to walk a long distance before coming across a single coalowner or any other person interested in the coal industry who will agree and side with him on this point. The owners are interested in getting a fair selling price, exactly as the men are interested in getting a living wage, and they will certainly not take a different view because of the theories of the Manchester School, more-over contrary to common sense so far.

It really looks as if certain economists were there simply to discourage the aims and the hopes of suffering humanity, thus provoking class feeling and exciting hatred among the workers who are looking to the capitalist class for goodwill. But I am glad that Mr. Hunter has afforded me the opportunity of protesting against this mischievous attitude on the part of the adepts of the Manchester School which he represents, and of taking the Manchester bull by the horns.

For even assuming,

FOR ARGUMENT'S SAKE,

that an all-round rise of wages and prices would leave but a small or no balance at all in favour of the wage-earners, yet it would be something not to be despised, for the result would be to make money circulate to a larger extent than at present. And money is made for circulating. It is unquestionably better that it should be so, in the interests of industry and commerce, thus in that of the community at large, far better than to have it locked up in a few millionnaires' safes.

Moreover, the new social order which will replace the present régime, within a short delay after the realization of my scheme, thanks to all-round combination between workers, will alter many things.

DEMOCRACY WILL INTERVENE

in the drafting of the budget. It will exact that, in future, taxes shall be paid by those who can afford to do so, and no longer by those who cannot. And Democracy will have the last word on this matter. It is a problem which will be raised by the combined workers, and which can be solved without great difficulty. I have already devoted some thought to that subject, and I intend to make my views thereupon known as soon as the miners and the coalowners have discharged me of the work in which I am presently engaged. And being a practical man, not troubling myself with economic theories, in most of which I do not believe, but well versed in financial questions, I shall take great care not to put forth any unsound proposal.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Hunter's opinion with regard to the interest of masters and men in lower prices and lower wages will happily not prevent my scheme, with all its far-reaching consequences, economic, social and political as well, from being carried out in a near future. To make me renounce my efforts with that object in view would need stronger and more conclusive arguments than those put forth by Mr. Hunter.

It is said by a certain number of experts that, in a hundred years or even before, many coalfields in Great Britain will be more or less exhausted. I am, of course, unable to express a personal opinion upon the correctness or otherwise of the statements referred to, and, besides, my opinion would be of no value on this point. But what is certain is that, in the long run, one will have to

GO LOWER DOWN

and to work deeper seams for getting coal, thereby necessarily increasing the cost price, and this in a country where cheap coal is an article of faith—with the big consumers! Consequently, it may not be to Great Britain's interest to indefinitely increase her output of coal. I leave this question to be decided upon by those interested. But Great Britain having sacrificed agriculture and relying on her industry, the question is of vital importance for coming generations. At the present rate—an annual output of 202 millions of tons—more than 20,000 millions of tons will have been extracted at the end of next century. The regulation of the output will, at any rate, prevent the needless wasting of coal.

Another result of the realization of my scheme will be to shorten the working hours and to increase the wages on the Continent, and to a far greater extent than in Great Britain, in

But Mr. Hunter entirely ignores not only the details of my scheme, but also the economic principles underlying it. At any rate, he has dealt with my scheme without having seriously examined it. Projected he could not have represented the projected combination as a trust or a ring. Advocating the cause of the masses against the reign of plutocrats I cannot possibly be a partisan of anything resembling trusts or rings. On the contrary, I am a most determined enemy of all sorts of monopolies, especially when in private hands.

The combination suggested by me does not interfere with anybody's liberty, and particularly not with

THE COALOWNERS' LIBERTY

to manage their industry and their business according to their own views, as has been the case with all the combinations tried or proposed in the past, and which is the case, for instance, with the Westphalian Syndicate, or would have been the case with the combination proposed by the Welsh coalowners on Mr. David A. Thomas's initiative, if it had not failed to be brought about, as it was bound to do.

The adoption of my proposals will by no means prevent the coalowners from working their collieries on the lines convenient to them. They will be at liberty to extract any amount of coal during the working days and hours to be stipulated, and to sell their coal at any price convenient to them, to sell it below the cost price, and even to give it away for nothing, provided by doing so they do not injure their neighbours or the common interest, and provided they do not invoke "their" selling price in order to oppose the men's demand for decent wages. In these cases, but in these cases only, the international committee will step in and call them to order. By a simple warning to begin with and by other means, should not the warning prove to be effective.

THE PROJECTED COMBINATION

has simply for its object to protect the legitimate rights of those interested in the coal industry, masters and men alike, to prevent them from being shamelessly exploited, particularly in times of depressed trade, and to enable the owners to sell their coal at its actual value, viz., at a price sufficient to fairly remunerate capital and to secure a living wage to labour, without having to pay secret commissions to all sorts of people, a state of things which you in Great Britain seem to highly object to, more even than is done on the Continent. All this can and must be done, and without delay.

Mr. Hunter agrees that it can be done. He

an absolute certainty and, moreover, my earnest desire that it shall be so. My views on this particular point are shared by the miners, who are by no means so selfish as Mr. Hunter, supposes them to be.

I have repeated over and over again, and more particularly in my last pamphlet, "Diplomates et Mineurs," which, having been translated into English, will shortly be published in London, that the movement initiated by the miners will necessarily, and without delay, be initiated by many other workers. Mr. Hunter contends that if many other industries combine with a view to regulating their articles of commerce, thereby raising their prices—it is by no means certain that this will be the result—there will be no good of it all. Everybody, he says, is to receive more, and everybody is to pay more.

A similar opinion was expressed by some of the miners' delegates at the Paris Congress, 1895, and emphasised by several important newspapers, speaking in the name of the Manchester School and putting forth economic theories which they would like to be considered

TRUE AS THE GOSPEL.

These theories are, however, absolutely false. I have peremptorily demonstrated that in my above-named pamphlet, published by Crosby, Lockwood and Son, devoting a whole chapter to the subject under the heading "The Miners' Interest in Higher Wages." But as the "Morning Mail" will probably not be able to dispose of the space required for the insertion of that chapter—nine pages in print—I must refer Mr. Hunter, as well as anybody else who might wish to form for himself a sound opinion on the question, to what I have written thereon three or four years ago. I am, however, desirous of adding a few lines thereto.

The men's wages and the owners' profits can only be derived from

THE SELLING PRICE.

Higher wages and large profits mean higher prices, just as lower ~~wages~~ ~~profits~~ result in lower wages and smaller profits or no profits at all. Now, if higher wages, involving higher prices, are contrary to the men's interest, if the interest of the men lies in the direction of lower prices, consequently of lower wages, then the owners' case must be in the same direction. It must be in their interest, and for the same reason as that applied to the men, to sell their coal at low prices, if not at a loss, at any rate without profit, or at a very small profit. There is no way out of that, and although that may not be Mr. Hunter's opinion, or the opinion of the adepts of the Manchester School, I can assure

the coal industry to begin with, thus enabling many British industries to better compete the foreign market—with Germany especially.

The adoption of my scheme will further result in preventing strikes and lock-outs, which always inflict heavy losses on the nation, and unless my proposals are carried out, Great Britain, in the first place, will some day have to confront

A GIGANTIC STRIKE

should the trade unions succeed in the attempts made to form a strong federation with a view to resisting the recent national combination formed by the employers. Thus, the true friends of British industry, far from opposing my proposals, ought to support of them.

Great Britain's annual export of coal amounts to nearly 40,000,000 tons. Thus, 15, per cent means £2,000,000 on the coal exported, or an annual present of sometimes £6,000,000 or £8,000,000 made by Great Britain to foreigners and competitors when coal is given away at bad prices, or sold below the price easily to be obtained, even in times of depressed trade. This result would be attained simply by the output being regulated on the lines suggested by me, preventing undue competition, pressure of big consumers, and above all, the baneful interference of middlemen.

As a matter of fact,

THE CHEAP COAL SYSTEM

results in a sort of bounty system, adverse not to consumers, that is true, but unquestionably to the British nation as a whole. British Free Traders consider it necessary to "protect" industry by cheap coal, at the expense of the community, simply because they want to be enabled to sell their manufactured articles cheaper than their foreign competitors. They ridicule—and so far I entirely agree with them—Continental bounties on sugar, which consumers and the nation alike have to pay for on the Continent—in France with the object of protecting agriculture and particularly the culture of beetroot.

The two systems are, as you say in England, six of one and half a dozen of the other. Economists are often blind, and, decidedly, I am glad not to be

A PROFESSIONAL ECONOMIST.

Now, the realisation of my scheme will have for result to abolish Continental sugar bounties. Again, here I shall have to face the opposition and the anger of British consumers. But I can't help it. I never ignored that it is almost impossible to "contenter tout le monde et son père," in England you say, "everybody and his uncle," I believe.

